

being fought. When it was all over, two stage robbers were fatally wounded and the other two surrendered to Sheriff Barney—and the man of straw on the inside was literally shot to pieces. And this is the way it all happened, as Bloomer himself was fond of telling it:

"You see, they didn't put me on. Never seen a sheriff yet that thought a stage driver had nerve enough to play out his hand in a game like that; an' I don't know but a feller would git a little bit rattled a-wonderin' how he's agoin' to come out at the end o' the game. It's purty ticklish bizness to be a-sittin' on a stage through the long, dark hours o' the night 'n' a-guessin' whether yer goin' ter drive back er ride in a box. But the way it all happened was like this:

"You see that kid what stole the handkerchief done that for a blind. His ol' woman she put him on. She writes a note ter France 'n' tell the kid ter drop it in his pocket 'n' steal his handkercher, er anythin' else he could git his hands on, 'n' then kinder loiter 'roun' so's to git caught. Well, sir, that ol' Black Rosa was a corker. She gives the whole snap away in the note, 'n' she tells France ter have the boy put in jail, 'n' that'd be a tip for her that he gets the note. Then she sets up a howl 'n' throws the gang off, an' havin' bin drinkin' considerable an' feelin' a leetle bit skeered that her play wouldn't win, she was knocked clean out—excited—'n' fainted on the deal square.

"So France, w'en he gits the ol' woman's note, he just quietly lets Barney in, 'n' Barney he tells him his system, 'n' they plays it to win. W'n France he goes up to his room, Barney he goes 'n' gits his team 'n' meets France at the back door 'n' they goes out 'n' lays for the gang. 'Sonly one place on the road where a job o' stage robbin' could be done 'n' the robbers git away, an' Barney he knows the place, an' that's where they camps 'n' waits for the gang—an' they gits 'em dead to rights.

"That inside passenger 's w'at knocked me cold. They puts the stage agent onto the play, 'n' he fixes up a straw man—w'atye calls a dummy—'n' he loads him into the stage so's to fool me 'n' the road agents both.

"I reckon Black Rosa didn't know how near she was a-callin' the turn w'en she prescribed death for gringos. She didn't git the ones she was after in the fust place, but I reckon the death of her ol' man 'n' Pete Johnson suited her notions better, w'en she come to size up the job, fer they was both gringos—one was American 'n' t'other a Swede.

"They say them Mexicans has always got a grudge ag'in somebody, but never remembers a kindness; but the way that play was made it looks like ol' Black Rosa didn't fergit John France's kind words to her w'en the miners was a-joshin' her.

"Yes; perhaps the two silver dollars did have somethin' to do with it—silver was a great power 'n' Colorado 'n' them days."—Lewis Eddy, in N. Y. Advertiser.

### HIS BARGAIN.

**He Traded a Yoke of Oxen for a Volume of Shakespeare.**

A noted character on the border thirty-five years ago was old Jim Bridger, of Fort Bridger, Utah. This man, relates the Youth's Companion, on one occasion visited New York, and saw Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" performed. He had no clear idea as to who Shakespeare was, but he conceived the most extravagant admiration for his genius.

He returned to the fort, and resumed the selling of stock and supplies to travelers and emigrants. One day a man came who had set his heart upon buying a particular yoke of oxen, with which, for some reason or other, Jim was determined not to part.

The man sent a messenger one morning to make a final appeal for the desired yoke, but Jim proved obdurate, remarking that "there wa'n't no use talkin' about it any more."

"Well, he wants 'em," said the messenger. "He's a-waitin' for 'em; he just sets there readin' a book called 'Shakespeare' and a-waitin' for them oxen."

"What!" ejaculated Jim, springing to his feet. "Here you, gimme my boots!"

He ran to the corral as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Stranger," he gasped, breathlessly, when he had reached the man, "jest gimme that book and take them oxen."

"Oh, no," said the man; "I just brought the book to read on the way, not to sell."

"Stranger," returned Jim, firmly, "jest you take them oxen and gimme over that book."

The man did so, after some demurring, and Jim, who hired a reader to further his acquaintance with the object of his admiration, was never heard to complain of his bargain, but rather boasted of it on many occasions.

### BIRDS COME BACK.

**An Instance of Instinct Related by a Truthful Southern Man.**

Mr. C. B. Smith, secretary of the Jacksonville board of trade, relates a wonderful story of a bird's instinct, which he vouches for. It is to the following effect: Some time in April last a Chicago woman who was visiting him, she being Mrs. Smith's niece, purchased two nonpareils. On the tenth of that month, as she was getting ready to go home, by some means the cage door was opened and the female bird escaped. She did not desire to take one bird with her, and she left the male bird in the cage at Mr. Smith's, says the Savannah News.

The other morning, as Mrs. Smith was in the room where the cage containing the single bird was, another bird flew through the open window and began circling around the room and finally perched itself near the cage. Mrs. Smith looked at it attentively, and then said to her servant, who stood near by, that this was the bird that had flown off some months before. The servant was incredulous, but Mrs. Smith went up to the strange bird and held out her hand. With a little flut-

ter it settled on her finger. She opened the cage and the bird hopped in, seemingly pleased to get back again. Its mate was at first rather shy of the stranger but within an hour the two were chatting away in bird language at a great rate.

### A CURIOUS PROVISION.

**One of Nature's Ways of Protecting Her Own.**

"Nature has wonderful ways of guarding against the extinction of species," said a Wichita (Kan.) man to a St. Louis Globe-Democrat writer. "The manner in which the eggs and young of the prairie chicken and other ground-nesting birds are protected against their numerous enemies is specially curious. Their escape is attributed by the majority of sportsmen to the alleged fact that in nesting birds the scent which is given out at other times is suppressed. In proof of this statement the fact is adduced that dogs, even those of the keenest powers of smell, will pass within a few feet, or even a less distance of a nesting pheasant without showing the least suspicion that game is near, if only the bird is concealed from sight. This would seem to be pretty strong evidence, but some naturalists refuse to be convinced. They reason that secretions and exhalations are involuntary and therefore cannot be suppressed by the will of an animal. Take whichever side you will. To me it seems likely that, as the exhalation is involuntary, its suppression during incubation may be equally so, and both may be accounted for on physiological grounds when the prying eyes of our naturalists are turned in that direction.

### THE BICYCLE.

**A New Work to Which That Useful Machine Has Been Put.**

The bicycle is being put to many strange uses in these days. It is no longer an instrument for pleasure alone. It is used, of course, everywhere as a cheap and rapid means of transportation, and has the advantage over the horse of not eating anything. That its use in war has been contemplated has been well understood, and that before long it will figure in the army is very likely.

But it is doubtful if the inventor of the machine ever thought anybody would utilize a bicycle in the way that it is used up in Berkshire, Mass., where the boys can be seen at night, mounted on their "bikes," going after the cows.

The only difficulty is, of course, to be able to ride slow enough, and with this sort of practice those youngsters ought to be able to win a slow bicycle race anywhere.

### His Feet.

An honest young man, who had escaped a great peril by an act of heroism, was much complimented for his bravery. One lady said: "I wish I could have seen your feet." Whereupon he blushed and stammered, and finally pointing to his pedal extremities, said: "Well, there they be, mum."